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## FARM ANIMAL NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2021

### HOW WELL PROTECTED ARE YOUR BULLING HEIFERS AGAINST BVD?



STAMP IT OUT!

At our recent “BVD Stamp it Out” webinar we highlighted several examples of how BVD infection can be introduced into previously uninfected herds by accidental exposure to the virus through nose to nose contact with neighbouring cattle.

We discussed several case studies during the online meeting and in one instance heifers which had recently been served/PD’ed in calf were turned out for summer unvaccinated, during which time the cattle came into contact with BVD virus “over the fence” resulting in the birth of PI calves, and a major incursion of BVD entered into the herd. Consideration should be given to vaccinating replacement heifers against BVD if they are to be summered away from home.

**Bovela** is a single shot vaccine which provides protection for 12 months preventing formation of PI calves if animals are vaccinated prior to service.

For more information about BVD please speak to one of the Farm Vets.

Our next BVD Webinar will take place on the **27<sup>th</sup> April** , please contact the surgery to book a free place.

## THE NEXT CHAPTER



Many years ago, when I was at school, the original James Herriot television series was running. I saw the outdoor life, the scenery and the varied, challenging, funny, dangerous, bizarre situations that he encountered and decided that that was the life I wanted. A lot of years later, having led that life, my hair has relocated and my shoulders, wrists and thumbs have started making strange crunching noises when I calve cows and put calfbeds back ( to such a degree that sometimes I have to reassure the farmer that the noise is coming from me and not the cow). I decided a while ago that this would be my last lambing time, and that it was time to start a different chapter of life. I will therefore be retiring from the practice at the end of May, and having my wellies surgically removed in early June

Over the years I have been kicked, butted, chased and occasionally totally squashed ( and that’s just by the clients ) but there is very little that I would have changed. I feel

privileged to have been able to have done this fantastic job , in an area of the country that I love, working with a very special group of colleagues and clients ( some that moved on to other jobs and areas and some sadly no longer with us at all ) over many years. I never felt the need to move to pastures new, because I knew the countryside and the people wouldn’t be any better than here – there is nowhere quite like The Dales. I wish you all, clients, colleagues and the practice well for the future.

John



# JOINT ILL IN LAMBS

## DO YOU KNOW WHERE IT COMES FROM?

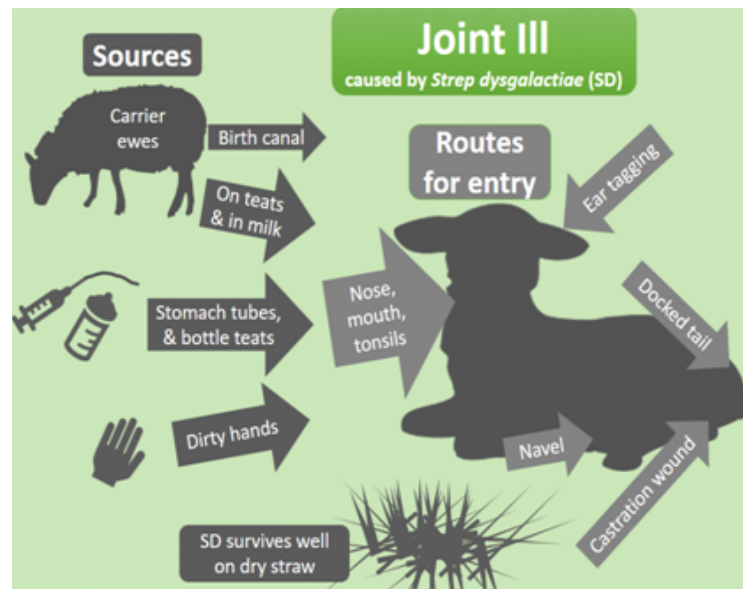
The bacteria *Streptococcus Dysgalactiae* is isolated from the affected joints of over 90% of lambs with joint ill.

### *S.Dysgalactiae* is commonly found in the environment:

- In the birth canal and milk of ewes and on teats
- On our hands
- On feeding bottles, teats and tubing equipment
- On tags, taggers, rings and elastrators
- In the environment; it can survive in a dormant state in dry straw!

### *S.Dysgalactiae* can gain entry into lambs in many ways:

- By mouth
- Through the navel
- Through the skin after castration, docking or tagging



### Our advice in flocks where we can see outbreaks of joint ill is to ensure:

- Good Colostrum uptake in all lambs. Colostrum is Gold! It really is the most valuable method of preventative care we can give to our newborns. A lamb should get 50ml/kg as soon as possible after birth, and 100ml/kg within the first 6 hours. They should then go on to have 200ml/kg in the first 24 hours.
- If your lambs are not full to the brim they need topping up. Ewe colostrum is the very best supplement with good quality cow colostrum running a close second. A **good quality** artificial powdered colostrum is useful if neither of these are available—we stock **Immucol** and **Lamaid** here at the surgery. **In the first 24 hours if a milk replacer is fed you will only water down the colostrum making it less efficient and reducing it's protective properties.** (More information can be found on last month's newsletter on our website).
- Pay attention to hygiene! We know this is easier said than done, especially with the weather being as it has been, but keeping housing pens dry and clean along with equipment used to manage the lambs will all reduce the risk of joint ill.

### Common issues we see on farm are:

- Not disinfecting bottles and tubes between lambs
- Castrating, tagging, docking on wet days
- Not disinfecting tags and equipment—surgical spirit is ideal.
- Overstocking
- Damp bedding in lambing sheds
- Contamination building up in individual pens

### Treatment

- It is vital that treatment is started as soon as possible before permanent damage is done to the joint surfaces and a long course of treatment is required. Treatment should be continued for 7 days to prevent flare-ups. Penicillin based products are the antibiotic of choice for treating joint ill (most *S.Dysgalactiae* isolates are resistant to commonly used antibiotics Terramycin, Neomycin and Spectinomycin).
- An anti-inflammatory/painkiller (**Metacam**) will help to reduce swelling and improve the efficiency of the antibiotic. It is important that these drugs are not overdosed as they can cause serious damage to kidneys especially in sick animals.

**If you are experiencing significant joint ill problems in your lambs please speak to one of the farm vets and discuss likely sources of infection and treatment.**





# ORF IN LAMBS

- Orf is a highly infectious viral disease of sheep and goats which can also infect humans
- In lambs Orf most commonly occurs as pustules around the mouth and nose although it can also be seen around teeth
- Orf spreads onto the teats of ewes often predisposing to mastitis
- Orf lesions are painful for animals affected leading to reduced feeding and lower growth rates and in severe cases death



## Treatment

Orf is a viral infection and cannot be controlled by antibiotic injections, however applications of an antibiotic spray to the lesions and in individual severe cases, a long acting antibiotic injection (e.g. **Terramycin LA, Alamycin LA, Trymox LA**) in conjunction with a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory/pain killer (e.g. **Metacam**) will help to control secondary bacterial infection.

- It may be necessary to bottle feed affected lambs if the ewe develops lesions on her teats
- Gloves should be worn at all times when handling lambs with Orf
- Bottles and teats should be disinfected/sterilised between uses

## Protection of Spread

The scabs from affected animals are usually lost from the skin after around 1 month. The virus in the scab remains infective for years in cool dry conditions but survives poorly in wet conditions outside. If you have any outbreak of Orf in a lambing shed then increased frequency of topping up bedding with clean, dry straw is important and if possible infected animals should be separated from the group, although symptomless carrier animals also exist. The building should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible.

## Vaccination

- **Scabivax Forte** is a live virus vaccine
- Applied by lightly scratching the skin under the forelimb
- Lambs can be vaccinated from 24 hours of age, vaccine takes 4-8 weeks for full immunity to develop and immunity lasts for 1 year
- **Vaccine should not be used in flocks with no history of Orf**

To see a video of correct vaccination technique visit our website [www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk](http://www.daleheadvetgroup.co.uk)



# RISK TO DOGS—KEXXTONE BOLUS



Kexxtone Boluses are used in the dairy industry and are administered to cows 3 weeks before calving. The boluses are only administered to cattle who are at risk of ketosis (e.g. overfat, lean, cows carrying twins, very high yielders etc.) reducing the negative energy balance after calving and therefore reducing the risks of ketosis, milk fever, retained cleansings and displaced stomachs.

Kexxtone Boluses contain Monensin which is toxic to dogs if ingested. There has been an isolated case (not in this area!) of a dog being poisoned as a result of chewing a bolus that had been coughed up after being administered to a cow. The manufacturers would like to remind farmers to dispose of any regurgitated bolus casings when found and not allow dogs access to them.

**If you suspect your dog may of ingested a Kexxtone Bolus, contact the surgery urgently.**

# COW COMFORT—REST

How do we keep our dairy cows producing good quantities of quality milk? We keep them healthy and well fed. So what has cow comfort got to do with it? Pretty much everything.

Any mammal can produce milk – but modern day cows are performance athletes. If we want them to produce good quantities of quality milk then we need them to be at the top of their game. We keep them free from disease with vaccines, we feed them the best forage we can produce, we get balanced concentrates and adapt their diet at different stages of lactation, we give them minerals and medicines – but just like any athletes they need the fundamentals of biology in order to succeed;

For a cow this is:

- Feed
- Water
- Light
- Air
- Rest
- Space, as defined by the CowSignals Diamond created by the CowSignals Training Company.

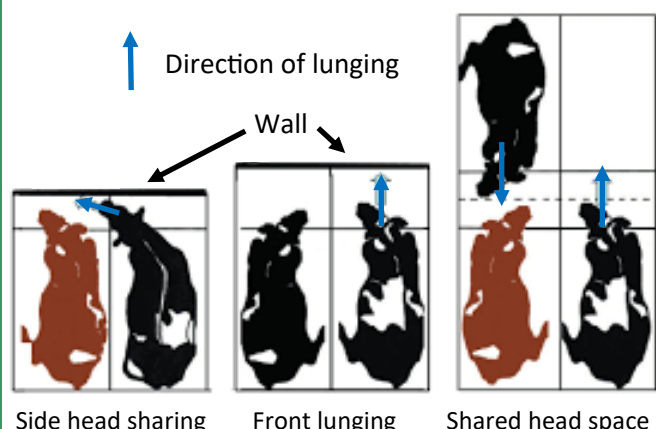
Over the next few newsletters we will look at each of these areas in a little more detail;

## Rest

Before any sporting event or competition an athlete needs a good nights rest. A Dairy Cow is in constant performance mode during lactation so it stands to reason that in between milkings as well as feeding and drinking she needs to get a lot of rest.

Cows don't need much sleep, only about 30 minutes in 24 hours, but they do need to lie down in order to rest and ruminate – ideally for up to 14 hours. In order to do this they need the bed to be comfortable – a deep soft substrate such as sand or a thick mattress. When cows are lying down, up to 30% more blood circulates through the udder; and so for every extra hours rest a cow is likely to produce an extra 1.6litres of milk at the next milking.

If the bed is not comfy enough and she spends time standing in the cubicle – or even worse standing in the passageway as there are not enough cubicles – you are stopping that cow from performing, as well as increasing the pressures on her feet – increasing the risk of lameness.



Side head sharing

Front lunging

Shared head space

Cubicle design is just as important as bed comfort; If the cubicle is not big enough that a cow can get up and down without banging herself, she will decrease the amount of times she gets up to feed. Ideally we want her to feed 12 times per day – so standing needs to be easy for her to do without a negative association of a bang. Cubicle width, total bed length and lunge space are essential things to consider when assessing your cubicles. Imagine having a big day ahead of you and having to sleep in a bed that's too hard, you can't stretch out in and every time you get up you bang your head – how would you perform the next day?

## Emailing Invoices

Please be aware that we are now able to email your invoice and a copy of our newsletter directly to the primary email address held on account for you here at the surgery. If you would like to start receiving your invoice by email, please contact the surgery to ensure that we have your current email address and also to complete a GDPR form which we need to hold on file to say that you are happy to receive different types of information from us in different formats.

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